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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION
WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING
OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL
COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

QUESTION OF SENDING VISITING MISSIONS TO TERRITORIES

Report of the Chairman

1. At its 1407th meeting, on 28 July 1992, the Special Committee adopted a resolution concerning the question of sending visiting missions to Territories. 1/ The operative paragraphs of the resolution read as follows:

"The Special Committee,

"...

"1. Stresses the need to dispatch periodic visiting missions to colonial Territories in order to facilitate the full, speedy and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples with respect to those Territories;

"2. Calls upon the administering Powers to cooperate or continue to cooperate with the United Nations by receiving United Nations visiting missions in the Territories under their administration;

"3. Continues to call upon those administering Powers that are not participating in the work of the Special Committee to reconsider their decisions and to take an active part in the work of the Committee;

"4. Requests its Chairman to continue consultations with the administering Powers concerned on the implementation of paragraph 2 of the present resolution and to report thereon to the Special Committee as appropriate."

2. An account of the consultations held by the Chairman in accordance with paragraph 4 of the resolution is set out below.

3. The question of sending visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories was a priority item on the agenda of all the consultations the Chairman held with representatives of the administering Powers during the period under review. On each occasion, the Chairman reiterated the Special Committee's view that the information furnished by the administering Powers under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations could not replace the unique opportunity provided by visiting missions to obtain first-hand information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories and to ascertain the wishes and aspirations of their peoples.

4. The Chairman appealed to the administering Powers to cooperate or continue to cooperate with the United Nations for the sending of such missions. It was the understanding of the Special Committee, from the exchange of views that took place at its regional seminars held in 1990, 1992 and 1993, 2/ that some territorial Governments had expressed their willingness to receive United Nations visiting missions.

5. The Chairman informed his interlocutors that the Special Committee continued to attach the utmost importance to the cooperation of the administering Powers. Their full cooperation was indispensable for the successful implementation of the Plan of Action approved by the General Assembly for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The Chairman took that opportunity to express his appreciation to the administering Powers concerned for their cooperation in facilitating the participation of a number of representatives from Non-Self-Governing Territories in the two seminars that the Committee had organized within the context of that International Decade.

6. The Chairman drew the attention of the representatives of the administering Powers to the efforts that the Special Committee continued to deploy in order to improve its efficiency and methods of work in fulfilling its mandate. He pointed out that a number of the measures initiated by the Committee in that regard had taken into account the concerns expressed by some administering Powers and, therefore, should contribute to the restoration of a climate of cooperation between them and the Committee.

7. As in previous years, the administering Powers consulted reiterated their willingness to continue to provide all necessary information on the Territories under their administration in accordance with Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations. With regard to the dispatch of visiting missions, however, the same willingness was not displayed and it appeared that in most cases, further efforts by the Special Committee would be required before the full cooperation of the administering Powers concerned could be restored.

8. In this connection, the representative of one of the administering Powers stated that, with the end of the cold war, many changes had taken place in the world. He expressed the hope that some of those changes would be reflected in the work of the Special Committee. He said that references to certain issues in the resolutions of the Committee which, in his view were not within the purview of the Committee, were not constructive and did not contribute to the Committee's effective performance. The representative considered that the Committee, in rationalizing its work, should make every effort to respond to his

Government's concerns, thereby paving the way for closer cooperation and participation by that administering Power in the work of the Committee. The representative reiterated his Government's total commitment to the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations concerning Non-Self-Governing Territories. On the question of visiting missions to Territories under its administration, the representative stated that his Government would continue to work with the Committee in resolving that question.

9. The Chairman took note with appreciation of the invitation extended to the Special Committee on 20 May 1993 (A/AC.109/1162) by the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations on behalf of his Government, to dispatch a visiting mission to Tokelau in the first half of 1994. The Chairman noted that the invitation had the full support of the people of Tokelau. In that connection, the Chairman recalled that a statement prepared by the Faipule (joint chairmen of the General Fono of Tokelau had been delivered on their behalf by the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations on 25 May 1993, at the 669th meeting of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance (GA/COL/2879).

10. The Chairman will keep the Special Committee apprised of any further developments in his consultations with the administering Powers concerned on this question.

11. A list of the visiting missions dispatched by the Special Committee or by the General Assembly is contained in the annex to the present report.

Notes

1/ See A/47/23 (Part II), chap. IV, para. 17. The complete report is to be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/47/23).

2/ Regional seminars held in Vanuatu (A/AC.109/1040 and Corr.1) and Barbados (A/AC.109/1043) in 1990; in Grenada (A/AC.109/1114) in 1992; and in Papua New Guinea (to be issued as A/AC.109/1159) in 1993. The first two were held in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; the last two were held within the context of the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

Annex

VISITING MISSIONS DISPATCHED BY THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OR BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1965 Cook Islands (elections supervision)

1966 Equatorial Guinea

1967 Aden

1968 Equatorial Guinea (referendum/elections supervision)

1971 Papua New Guinea (jointly with the Trusteeship Council)

1972 Niue
Papua New Guinea (elections observation - jointly with the Trusteeship Council

1974 Niue (referendum observation)
Cocos (Keeling) Islands
Gilbert and Ellice Islands (referendum observation)

1975 Cape Verde
Montserrat
Spanish Sahara

1976 British Virgin Islands
Tokelau

1977 French Somaliland (referendum/elections observation)
Cayman Islands
United States Virgin Islands

1979 Guam
New Hebrides

1980 Turks and Caicos Islands (April)
Cocos (Keeling) Islands
Turks and Caicos Islands (October/November) (elections observation)

1981 Tokelau
American Samoa

1982 Montserrat

1984 Cocos (Keeling) Islands (act of self-determination)
Anguilla

1986 Tokelau

1989 Namibia (elections observation)